How many standards?

Investigating 'the double standard model' in the light of evaluative patterns from a young urban community

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How many standards? Investigating 'the double standard model' in the light of evaluative patterns from a young urban community.

Marie Maegaard

Introduction

Discussions of standardisation and standard languages has a long history in linguistics. Tore Kristiansen has contributed to these discussions in various ways, and in this chapter I will focus on his claim that young Danes operate with two standards, one for the media and one for the school. This 'double standard model' is disussed and developed in an analysis of results from a verbal guise experiment among Copenhagen adolescents.

Subjective processes and language change

The basic assumption underlying all of Kristiansen's work is that

> Language varies and changes as a consequence of the valorisation processes inherently present in the construction of boundaries between social groups. As a consequence, and to put it simply, we predict that people will (be motivated to) set aside or restrict speech habits that they feel bad about and adopt ways of speaking that they see positively – as an important means of supporting and enhancing a positive self-image by positioning oneself in the web of inter-group relationships. (Kristiansen, Garrett & Coupland 2005: 12-13)

This socio-psychological or *subjective* motivation for language change is set against *objective* factors like the physiological constitution and functioning of human speech organs, the mental capacity and functioning of the human brain, the linguistic contexts of particular variables etc. The claim is that objective factors alone are not enough to explain linguistic change. Thus, in the effort to understand linguistic change, one needs to also examine the subjective processes underlying the change (Kristiansen, Garrett & Coupland 2005: 10-11).

One obvious question in this context is to which extent it is possible at all to divide people's attitudes (or 'feelings' as it is put in the above quote) into positive and negative attitudes, and whether or not these attitudes are stable across different contexts. The first issue, I will get back to later in this chapter; the second is is not an issue for this chapter, since I discuss only strictly elicited macro-level evaluations, and do not go into analyses of linguistic variation used in context.

Conscious and subconscious attitudes

A very important distinction in Kristiansen's theoretical framework is the distinction between the concepts *conscious* and *subconscious* language attitudes. Conscious attitudes are the ones people express when they are aware of the fact that they are expressing attitudes, whereas subconscious attitudes are the ones people express when they are unaware of the fact that they are expressing attitudes. In Kristiansen's framework this distinction is often methodologically operationalised in the distinction between two types of data. Data elicited through label ranking tasks are seen as expressions of conscious attitudes, whereas data elicited through the use of a special kind of verbal guise method are seen as expressions of subconscious attitudes. The data elicited through the use of these two methods are not directly comparable (see Preston, this volume, for a discussion), but it is obvious that there is a huge difference in the linguistic awareness of the informants in the two types of data elicitation.

A very important point in Kristiansen's thinking is the claim that elicitation of subconscious attitudes is only possible if the respondent is not aware that she is taking part in a linguistic experiment. If the respondent realises that the researcher conducting the experiment is from a linguistic department at university, if the respondent is asked to answer questions about linguistic issues regarding the speech samples, or if the respondent is in other ways made aware that the experiment is possibly part of a linguistic study, it is very unlikely that she will express the same attitudes towards the linguistic variation as she would under circumstances where she was not aware of the purpose of the investigation. This is why, in Kristiansen's theoretical framework, the use of indirect methods (Garrett et al. 2003) in the study of language attitudes is not enough to ensure the elicitation of subconscious attitudes.

Preston argues elsewhere in this volume that consciousness in this regard should be considered a continuum, stretching from conscious to subconscious, not an 'either-or' (Preston, this volume). This notion of consciousness makes it possible for Preston to interpret the subjective reaction tests carried out by Labov in New York (1963) as elicitations of subconscious attitudes towards the use of postvocalic (r). Even though the respondents are well aware that they are talking to a linguist when responding to the different guises, Preston points out that their recognition of the variation in the use of postvocalic (r) is below the level of consciousness. Therefore, he argues, in the process of categorising speakers on an occupational scale "the results of the subconscious processing of /r/ and

the conscious evaluation of professional suitability have obviously communicated with one another“ (Preston, this volume). This of course complicates the picture, and Preston is undoubtedly right that the division of attitudes into conscious or subconscious is too uni-dimensional. On the other hand, the Labov study is different from the studies carried out in Denmark during the last years, because in Kristiansen's methodology, not only should the processing of /r/ be subconscious; the respondent should also be unaware of the fact that the experiment was part of a linguistic study (which was not the case in the Labov study).

In Kristiansen's understanding, the subconscious attitudes are the *real* attitudes. He argues that since conscious language attitudes do not seem to have any connection to linguistic change, they are not interesting in the study of linguistic change. Subconscious attitudes, on the other hand, have been seen to correlate with ongoing change, and this is interpreted by Kristiansen as an implication that subconscious attitudes have an important impact on the change (Kristiansen 2009: 157). As has been shown in several studies from speech communities all over Denmark, the positive subconscious attitudes correspond to the language change in progress, where we see features from the modern Copenhagen accented speech gaining grounds on the expense of features from the local accent. The conscious attitudes differ from the subconscious ones in an upgrading of the local accents. However, this pattern does not correspond to the linguistic change in Danish, and this is the reason why Kristiansen finds that they are not important in understanding processes of linguistic change.

The Kristiansen verbal guise method

Since the elicitation of subconscious attitudes is crucial to Kristiansen's thinking about socio-psychological processes and linguistic change, it is of great importance to him that the methods used in verbal guise experiments, encourage expressions of this kind of attitudes. As mentioned earlier, it is important that respondents do not realise that they are taking part in a linguistic experiment; otherwise different (ie. conscious) attitudes may be expressed. This is probably the most significant difference between Kristiansen's studies and most other studies conducted using verbal guise methodology. It results in experiments where there cannot be questions about any linguistic issues in the questionnaire (e.g. 'does this person sound local?', 'how articulate is this person?' etc.), and the fieldworker cannot reveal his or her institutional background.

Apart from the demand for elicitation of subconscious attitudes, the Kristiansen framework is not very different from most other verbal guise studies conducted using samples of spontaneous speech. Kristiansen uses two representatives of each accent or variety, the speech samples are approximately 20-30 seconds long, and are intended 'neutral' with regard to semantic content (Garrett, Coupland & Williams 2003: 60ff.). Questionnaires contain evaluations with regard to personality traits expressed as 7-point Likert-scales (and sometimes educational level).

Two standards?

The results from all the verbal guise experiments carried out using the specific technique developed by Kristiansen are quite clear. They all show that subconsciously respondents downgrade the local accented speech, while they upgrade the Copenhagen accented speech. However, the Copenhagen speakers are upgraded in what appears to be two different dimensions. The conservative Copenhagen speakers are evaluated positively on scales like: 'Intelligent-stupid', 'conscientious – happy-go-lucky' etc. which Kristiansen describes as *superiority*-scales, using a term from Zahn and Hopper's classic study (Zahn & Hopper 1985). The modern Copenhagen speakers, on the other hand, are evaluated positively on the other scales. These are scales like 'fascinating – boring', 'self-assured – insecure', 'cool – uncool' etc. This dimension Kristiansen labels *dynamism*, also with a term from Zahn and Hopper. I will not go into a detailed description and discussion of the distinction between these two dimensions here (see Kristiansen, forthcoming; Preston, this volume, for more on this).

Kristiansen's point is that the positive evaluations of the two types of Copenhagen speech show that Danes operate with two norm ideals – two standards. In this understanding a standard language is a norm ideal, which means that the standard language is not necessarily (if ever) the same as the actual language use, but it is an *ideal* (Kristiansen 1992). Kristiansen also refers to Crowley's (1999) discussions of 'excellence' and 'uniformity' as two criteria that are frequently used when determining whether or not a variety can be called 'standard', even though the two criteria are rarely used together. Nonetheless, Kristiansen argues that Modern and Conservative Copenhagen accented speech fulfils both criteria (2001: 11), and thus can be seen as standard accents no matter which of the two criteria one uses.

Having established that the Danes operate with two standard accents, Kristiansen interprets the social meaning into social functions of the two accents appearing in the speech samples. He argues that since the one accent has social meanings related to dynamism tied to it, and the other has social meanings related to superiority tied to it, the two accents must function in two different domains. I will not go into a discussion of the link between social meaning and social function here, but focus on the part of the argument that has to do with the division into two standards. Kristiansen concludes:

> The bottom line is that young Danes seem to operate with two 'standards' when it comes to language: one for the school, where 'excellence' is perceived in terms of Superiority; and one for the media, where 'excellence' is perceived in terms of Dynamism (2001: 22)

To be able to conclude this, Kristiansen makes the assumption that the two types of Copenhagen accented speech appearing in the speech samples are the only relevant candidates for positive evaluations. This may very well be so, especially in the 1980's when the first study was conducted. The opposition between the 'high' and 'low' Copenhagen accents was firmly established, not just in linguistic descriptions, but also in the public discourse on language use. Naturally, we do not know how many Copenhagen accented ways of speaking these respondents would have reacted positively towards, because we have not asked them, but the operationalisation of Copenhagen speech into two accents is probably not too far from the way most Danes perceived Copenhagen accented speech at the time of the investigation. The point I am going to make in the following is that it is very likely that today, 20 years later, the linguistic situation is quite different in Denmark and in most Western societies with respect to norm ideals, varieties, distinctions between 'high' and 'low' etc.

Kristiansen interprets his results in the frame of late modern society, where he finds:

> a relatively recent division of public life. On the one hand, we have the public domain of education and business, and on the other, the public domain of the modern spoken media. There is quite a difference between these two domains and the prestige they offer. (Kristiansen 2001: 21)

The point Kristiansen is making throughout his paper is that the division into two standards, one for the media, one for the school, is a recent development in the Danish speech community. This is very

much in line with the description of linguistic norms in other speech communities, for instance contemporary Britain as it is presented by Agha (2007). Agha states that one of the requirements for a register to be a standard is that it is 'associated with images of personhood judged in 'positive' terms relative to other varieties' (2007: 224). This is true for RP, but it is also true for Estuary English, which is by the same token seen by some linguists as a new form of standard language that developed during the 1980's. In Agha's interpretation of the British situation, there are important differences between RP and Estuary English: '[...] 'Mainstream' RP and Estuary English are centered in very different institutional loci. The demographic profiles of their speakers are also different, despite some overlap' (2007: 228). Like Kristiansen, Agha views the different forms of standard as related to different *domains* or *institutional loci*. This does not imply that the two accents will not converge, but at the moment they are, in Agha's interpretation, two different registers.

In both the Danish and the British case, as they are presented here, the interpretation is that the existence of a standard accent associated with *dynamism*, *straightforwardness* etc. is a recent development that has been taking place in the sociological frame of late modernity. Coupland (this volume) views the issue differently, and argues that especially when we interpret society in terms of late modernity it 'requires a more fluid approach to sociolinguistic and semiotic function' (Coupland, this volume). This means that speaking of a 'standard' is not possible since criteria like 'correctness', 'high overt prestige' (or 'excellence' as in Kristiansen's discussions above) or 'uniformity' (which are the notions that Coupland takes as common criteria in characterising a 'standard language') are complicated by the fact that linguistic practices are interpreted differently by speakers (and listeners) across different situations and contexts. There are, for instance, contexts where RP is impossible to use, and where other varieties are demanded and even positively evaluated. Furthermore, Coupland refers to Chan and Goldthorpe (2007) who find that a majority of late modern society – the expanded middle class – are to be characterised as 'omnivorous' consumers, when it comes to cultural products (music, for instance). This analysis he takes further to cover the 'consumption' of linguistic variation as well:

> We would expect that people at the top of the social scale, however this might be measured, or claimed by people themselves, will have become more sociolinguistically omnivorous, as they are with musical taste, in their willingness to 'consume' (to accept and possibly even positively value) a wide range of language varieties. (Coupland, this volume)

If this is so, it opens the possibility that not only the two kinds of Copenhagen speech included in Kristiansen's studies are relevant as candidates for positive evaluations among young people. Perhaps we can take Kristiansen's deconstruction of the 'one standard norm' even further and find implications that at least in some communities in Denmark, several ways of speaking receive positive evaluations from listeners. As Kristiansen himself has often asserted, in Denmark no positive values are associated with locally (non-Copenhagen) accented speech when attitudes are offered subconsciously (Kristiansen, forthcoming). This means, that if we are to find positive subconscious evaluations of different kinds of spoken Danish, we would expect to find them in experiments that involve different kinds of Copenhagen accented speech.

In the rest of the chapter I will draw on results from a verbal guise study conducted in Copenhagen, in a young urban community. The study is not directly designed to test assumptions about the adolescents' willingness to 'accept and even positively value a wide range of varieties', but it might shed some light on the issue, and at least open for a discussion of the status of 'Copenhagen-based standard' in late modernity.

Linguistic 'consumption' among adolescent Copenhageners

The study that I wish to draw on in my discussion was originally part of a larger ethnographic and sociolinguistic study of adolescents in an urban school in Copenhagen (Maegaard 2007, 2008, forthcoming). The study combines methods from variationist sociolinguistics, ethnography, social psychology and attitudes research, and aims to shed light on relations between social categories, social practice and linguistic variation among 9th graders (around 15 years old) in a Copenhagen urban school, in the following referred to as The City School.

The City School has approximately 900 pupils, with varying socioeconomic backgrounds. Around 30% of the pupils are multilingual, which is the average in Copenhagen public schools (according to definitions and figures from the Copenhagen City Council, www.kk.dk). I engaged in participant observation (through seven months during 2002-03), where I participated in classes, breaks, school parties, sports events etc., and carried out ethnographic interviews with most pupils. Mainly due to cancellations and because some pupils did not want to participate in the interviews, not all pupils were interviewed (64 out of the 83 pupils in the cohort). For the entire project, the data consist of

field notes, a diary written after each day I spent with the pupils, recorded interviews, self-recordings, and responses to the speech samples in the verbal guise study.

During the ethnographic field work, focus was on *social categories* and *social practice*. Instead of deciding which social categories to focus on before entering this particular community of practice (Wenger 1998), I discovered which social categories were relevant based on observations during the ethnographic fieldwork. This resulted in analyses which, for instance, do not distinguish between pupils from different socio-economic backgrounds, but do distinguish between pupils belonging to the categories 'girls' or 'boys', and 'foreigners' or 'Danes' (which are the labels used by the pupils), since these distinctions are crucial to the social order in the school. I will not go into the details of analysis of social categories here (cf. Maegaard 2007: 127ff), but I mention them because it seems that in this particular late modern community issues of socioeconomic class had no relevance, whereas issues of gender and ethnicity had so indeed. This is not unexpected considering how late modernity is often construed as a condition where social forms and institutions that used to be important no longer serve as frames of reference for human actions (e.g. Giddens 1991, Baumann 2000), but in sociolinguistics we often tend to use criteria like socioeconomic class in our categorisation of informants, regardless of the fact that they may not be of any relevance to the community under study.

As mentioned earlier, the other focus point of the ethnographic fieldwork is social practice. Pupils in a school engage in many different practices. Some spend the breaks playing football in the school yard, others meet at specific places in the lobby to talk, others again stay in class reading or listening to music. It is of great importance to the pupils which practices they engage in, and which they do not engage in. As Lone, one of the girls, explains:

> Kim and all those, like Victor and all, they have some very- quite funny ways of dressing (.) you know, the kind of pants that stick to the leg and kind of (.) kind of weird big shoes and strange jumpers and things like that (.) and they bring lunch packs

Kim, Victor and the rest of their group are considered by the other pupils to be 'nerds'. This is to a large extent based on which practices they engage in; how they dress, what kind of leisure activities they engage in, their engagement in school activities, their clothing style, their lunch habits etc. (cf. Maegaard & Quist 2009). The fieldwork resulted in a focus on the following practices: smoking, the

use of alcohol, movement around the city, clothing, ways of walking, plans for the future, leisure activities, jobs, lunch habits, and activities during breaks in school (Maegaard 2007). These practices group together in different *style clusters* (Eckert 2001; Quist 2005; 2008), that is clusters of stylistic practices that contribute to a certain social meaning. Examples of three style clusters, 'nerdy boys', 'tough ethnically mixed boys', and 'foreign girls', are seen in table 1. Each is given a label signalling which type of persona that was associated with it in school. Some of the clusters did not have a label attached to them, and thus the clusters were given a name that would associate a persona corresponding to the persona constructions that took place every day in school. This applies to 'tough ethnically mixed boys', since this label was not used in school. The boys were referred to as the 'foreign boys and boys hanging out with foreigners', 'foreign boys and wannabes' etc. The practices have been divided into *positive* and *negative* identity practices. In the words of Bucholtz, the difference is:

> *Negative identity practices* are those that individuals employ to distance themselves from a rejected identity, while *positive identity practices* are those in which individuals engage in order actively to construct a chosen identity. In other words, negative identity practices define what their users are *not*, and hence emphasize identity as an intergroup phenomenon; positive identity practices define what their users *are*, and thus emphasize the intragroup aspects of social identity. (Bucholtz 1999: 211-212)

Obviously, it is not possible to distinguish clearly between positive and negative identity practices, as a specific social identity is always constructed through opposition. Engagement in certain practices typically results in non-engagement in others, and so positive and negative identity practices are two sides of the same coin. Still, dividing the practices into these two types may offer a useful overview.

	Style cluster: 'Nerdy boys'		**Style cluster: 'Tough ethnically mixed boys'**		**Style cluster: 'Foreign girls'**	
	Pos. identity practices	**Neg. identity practices**	**Pos. identity practices**	**Neg. identity practices**	**Pos. identity practices**	**Neg. identity practices**
Smoking		Do not smoke		Do not smoke		Do not smoke
Alcohol	Drink alcohol		Drink alcohol			Do not drink alcohol
Movements during breaks	Stay in class		Central lobby or outside		Central lobby	Never outside
Socialising across gender		No girlfriends and do not spend time with girls	Girlfriends and spend time with girls both in school and after school			No boyfriends and do not spend time with boys
Movements around the city		Do not go to other areas of the city	Go to other areas in the city in a non-institutional manner, ie. without adult control		Go to other areas in the city in an institutional manner, ie. in institutional frames, and always under adult control	
Leisure activities	Scout, computer club	Do not do sports	Fitness or football		Take lessons in mother tongue	Do not do sports

Job		No job	Job in a fashion store…	…or no job		No job
Lunch	Bring lunch pack		Buy food in supermarket or in shawarmashop		Buy food in supermarket or bring a roll or fruit	.
Way of walking			'Fidgeting' walk			
Clothes	Compared to mainstream norms, the clothes are untrendy. Sneakers and jeans but the sneakers are, like the jeans, often from unknown, cheap labels. Pants are neither tight nor baggy. T-shirts and sweatshirts are loose and in bright colours. No labelled clothes		Black/grey/white pop-clothes. Jeans (blue) and pants in other fabric, usually black. Loose but not baggy. T-shirt. Jewellery, necklaces. Sometimes a cap. Labelled clothes, e.g. Iceman, Jack & Jones		Dark clothes, leather shoes or boots often with high heals, possibly scarf, long shirts or blouses that reach the thigh, golden jewellery, thin bracelets and necklaces	
Plans for the future	Gymnasium	Not technical school	Gymnasium, possibly engineering or business gymnasium		Gymnasium	Not technical school

Table 1

The style clusters could be supplemented by numerous other practices, but the ones presented in table 1 are the ones that, based on the ethnographic fieldwork, stood out as highly salient and important in the community. These practices are the ones used in the systematic analysis characterising and delimiting the different clusters. The daily practices of all pupils were analysed according to these different clusters and on the basis of that, every pupil was assigned to a certain style cluster if possible (viz. if they were engaged in at least 8 out of 10 defining practices). The actual group of individuals assigned to a certain style cluster is later referred to as a *style group*. Most of the pupils fitted one of the clusters, but of course some pupils were impossible to place in any of them. The following phonetic analyses are based on only the language use of the pupils whom it was possible to categorise as belonging to one of the eight style groups.

The phonetic variation is analysed auditively with regard to ten variables. The non-standard variants are shown in table 2, with a few examples of words containing the variable. The variables are divided into three different kinds: 1) variables that have traditionally been seen to distinguish high from low Copenhagen speech, 2) variables that have traditionally been seen to distinguish younger from older speech, and 3) variables that have not traditionally been analysed in Danish variation studies (cf. Maegaard 2007: 81ff for a detailed description of the variables).

Traditional high/low-variables	**Traditional young/old-variables**	**Non-traditional variables**
'Lengthening of short vowels' (Low) 'snakke', 'gruppe', 'klasse'	Raising of (e) in the æng-variable: [ɐ̯ŋ] (Young) 'tænke', 'engelsk', 'penge'	Devoicing of initial r: [ʁ̥] 'rimelig', 'rød', 'ryge'
Affrication of initial t: [t͡s] (Low) 'ti', 'tusind', 'teori'	Fusion of [ð] and the preceding vowel V into [ⱽð] (Young) 'tid', 'hvad', 'sidde'	Fronting of s: [s̟] 'sidste', 'cykel', 'sejt'
Backing of the nucleus of the aj-diphthong: [ɑj] (Low) 'haj', 'lege', 'hejse'		Palatalization of initial t: [tʲ] 'ti', 'tusind', 'teori'
Fronting of the nucleus of the aj-diphthong: [aj] (High) 'haj', 'lege', 'hejse'		
Postalveolar [ʃ] for standard [ɕ] (High) 'sjov', 'speciel', 'charme'		

Table 2

Data used for the analysis of variables are the interviews. These are semi-structured, and analyses are made of the same phases in each interview. If possible, at least 20 occurrences of each variable are analysed, but for the æng-variable and the aj-variables this was not always possible, due to their low frequency.

Table 3 shows the use of the variables across the same three style clusters as in table 1. As can be seen from the table, the three style clusters are quite different, also when it comes to the use of phonetic variants. Individuals who can be labelled 'nerdy boys' use other phonetic variants than the two other groups, and with respect to the specific variants the 'nerdy boys' distinguish themselves especially by non-use, that is negative identity practices. The only variant that they use to a relatively high degree is 'lengthening of short vowels', whereas for most other variants the 'nerdy boys' stand out by having a very low frequency of use. This is not very surprising since 'nerd'-identity is typically associated with being correct, old-fashioned, and not in (Bucholtz 2001), and many of the variants studied here are either younger variants or variants that have not been studied before (which implies that they are 'new').

	Style cluster: 'Nerdy boys'		Style cluster: 'Tough ethnically mixed boys'		Style cluster: 'Foreign girls'	
	Pos. identity practices	**Neg. identity practices**	**Pos. identity practices**	**Neg. identity practices**	**Pos. identity practices**	**Neg. identity practices**
Variants	High frequency of: - lengthe-ning of short vowels	Low frequency of: - fronted (s) - affricated (t) - palatalised (t) - fronted (aj) - devoiced (r)	High frequency of: - palatalised (t) - alveolar (sj) - devoiced (r) - merging of *ð* and preceeding vowel - raised (eng)	Low frequency of: - fronted (aj)	High frequency of: - fronted (s) - affricated (t) - fronted (aj) - devoiced (r)	Low frequency of: - palatalised (t) - lengthening of short vowels - merging of *ð* and preceeding vowel - alveolar (sj) - raised (eng)

Tabel 5. Phonetic variation in three style clusters

Conversely, the two other style clusters, 'tough ethnically mixed boys' and 'foreign girls', are characterised by high frequencies of certain variants. Interestingly, the two style clusters are to a large extent in opposition to one another regarding the use of specific variants. Variants that are high frequent in the style cluster 'tough ethnically mixed boys' are low frequent in the style cluster 'foreign girls'. For the additional social practices involved in the two clusters, the pattern is the same: The practices that are part of the cluster 'tough ethnically mixed boys' are not part of the cluster 'foreign girls', and vice versa (cf. table 1). Thus linguistic practices are used on a par with other stylistic practices used by the pupils in their day-to-day construction of identity (cf. Maegaard & Quist 2009).

Having established these connections between linguistic behaviour and other social practices, in the original study, the question was whether or not the linguistic differences between style clusters were enough for listeners to 'recognise' the style cluster. Would listeners, for example, categorise the speakers 'right' in a verbal guise study? This was tested using a modified version of a Kristiansen type verbal guise method. In this context the results are interesting because they can give us an idea of the extent to which other accents than the ones used in Kristiansens's verbal guise experiments, could in fact be evaluated positively by young people.

The verbal guise experiment

For the verbal guise experiment, speech samples were selected, representing seven of the eight style clusters. The samples were not chosen based on occurrences of the variants studied in the variation part of the study, but rather based on 'semantic neutrality'. The idea is that the variation described

in terms of use of the ten variables is only a small part of the actual variation in the way the informants speak. But if one selects a few utterances from a person, it will contain enough sociolinguistic material for listeners to react to it. Verbal guise experiments are sometimes criticised for being holistic in their approach to variation. Many experiments feature speech samples constructed on the basis of spontaneous speech. Consequently, there is no strict control for how the speech samples differ from one another. Usually, researchers try to describe the variation as it appears to them, and sometimes they select passages containing specific variants (as in Kristiansen 1999, 2002, forthcoming, Maegaard 2001, 2005, 2007), but using this method, the analysis can never claim to be exhaustive. One might say then, that the approach I am presenting here is a super-holistic approach, and that by refraining from seeking to give a linguistic analysis of the samples one acknowledges the futility of that project.

For each style cluster, one speaker was selected to represent the group of pupils who drew on this cluster in their construction of social identity. The speakers, and the related cluster labels, are: Lykke ('tough Danish girls'), Samira ('foreign girls'), Louise ('nice Danish girls'), Victor ('nerdy boys'), Gustav ('nice Danish boys'), Robert ('tough Danish boys') and Rashid ('tough ethnically mixed boys'). Each speaker appears in two samples, and samples are approximately 8-10 seconds long. The questionnaire used for this study is open-ended. For each speech sample, it contains only the question: 'What is your immediate impression of this person? How do you think s/he is?' The study was carried out in 9th grade in two schools in Copenhagen: With a new year group of pupils at The City School (3 years after the original field work), and with a group of pupils at The North School. The responses were grouped according to semantic meaning, and table 4 shows the resulting speaker profiles. 101 listeners took part in the study, which amounted to 1110 responses in total, since some were blank or for other reasons were rejected from the analysis. The categorisations that appear in table 4 all have a frequency of at least 6 at The City School and 5 at The North School for the specific speech sample. On average, this amounts to approximately 14 % out of the total number of responses for each speech sample, which means that (on average) if a profile contains five labels, it will cover at least 70 % of all responses given to the specific speech sample.

	The City School	**The North School**

Lykke1	Tough, dominating, confused, problem child, indifferent	Immigrant, indifferent, strange way of speaking, pop girl, suburbian
Lykke5	Tough, dominating, problem child, positive	Immigrant, tough, indifferent, strange way of speaking, pop girl
Louise2	Snob, popular, self-centred, confident	Nice, snob, popular, blond, upper class, pop girl, Østerbro
Louise4	Snob, popular, self-centred, confident	Snob, popular, blond, bimbo/bitch, dislikable, pop girl
Samira3	Confident, ordinary, cautious, bright, insecure, serious	Nice, ordinary, calm
Samira6	Confident, ordinary, cautious, bright	Nice, ordinary, snob, serious
Robert7	Nice, dominating, problem child	Insecure, mature, nerd, cautious
Robert12	Insecure, ordinary, dominating, problem child	Nice, nerd, boring
Victor8	Bright, indifferent, nerd	Nice, bright, confident, popular, calm, mature
Victor11	Bright, indifferent, nerd, insecure	Nice, confident, popular, calm, nerd
Rashid9	Gay, immigrant, feminine, nice, a girls friend	Gay, immigrant, feminine, confident
Rashid14	Gay, immigrant, feminine, nice, smartass	Gay, immigrant, feminine, indifferent
Gustav10	Nice, ordinary, calm, cautious, sensible	Nice, ordinary, calm, cautious, sensitive
Gustav13	Nice, ordinary, calm, sensible	Nice, ordinary, calm

Table 4

As can be seen from the table, the same speaker gets quite similar evaluations in the different guises. However, there is – for some of the speakers – a difference between the evaluations at the two schools. There are many interesting aspects of these evaluative profiles (cf. Maegaard 2007; forthcoming), but in this chapter I will focus on issues of 'uniformity' and 'excellence' as in the definitions of standard language mentioned earlier.

It is not very easy to interpret the results with respect to 'uniformity', since these data are evaluations of linguistic behaviour. However, the evaluations are quite uniform, in that respondents categorise the speakers similarly, and there is not much internal disagreement (the labels applied to a certain speech sample are not in contrast with one another). This means that there is a high degree of agreement between the respondents, and in that way one might say that the results exhibit uniformity.

In terms of 'excellence' or positive evaluations, the results indicate that for these respondents, several ways of speaking are given positive values, even though they are characterised differently. It is not possible to give a precise conclusion regarding the respondents' positive or negative evaluations of the speakers, but it seems that only Lykke and Robert are associated with negative values (even though they are at the same time regarded as being 'nice' and 'positive'). Thus, the young respondents taking part in this study do not seem to subconsciously evaluate only a certain way of speaking (or two) positively. They seem to evaluate many ways of speaking positively, but at the same time they attribute different social meaning potentials to them. In Kristiansen's studies, different Copenhagen accented speech are associated with positive social menaing on different scales. The results above can be seen as an elaboration of his results. In Copenhagen, at least, young people attribute positive social meaning to many ways of speaking.

Concluding remarks

The starting point for this paper was Kristiansen's (2001) claim that the late modern Danish speech community operates with two standard accents. By drawing on Coupland's discussions of the concept of 'standard' in late modernity, and the results of a speaker evaluation experiment among Copenhagen adolescents, I discussed whether the division into two standards is a constructive model for the sociolinguistic situation in late modernity and especially if it can cover the linguistic diversity among urban youth and the associated evaluations. It seems that the model functions well in discussions of macro-level social meanings and dialect levelling, but when it comes to understanding the sociolinguistic situation in a particular community of practice, it can not be easily applied. By operating with two standard languages, Kristiansen has opened for a discussion of the notion of 'standard' itself, and this is the discussion I have tried to take further in this paper. It seems likely, judging from the results, that if we include more than just two different Copenhagen accents in our studies, we will obtain even more positive evaluations, possibly in different domains

or dimensions. This would leave us to either include these accents in the understanding of 'standard', or to abandon the notion of 'standard' altogether.

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